



Call for nominations to the AAL Science Advisory Committee

Applications for all positions close on Monday 30th October 2023, 8:00 PM AEDT. If openings remain after all applications received and completed by the deadline have been considered, late applications will be accepted.

[Astronomy Australia Limited](#) (AAL) is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee whose [members](#) are all Australian universities and research organisations with a significant astronomy research capability. Its core business is to manage programmes which provide astronomers with access to national astronomy infrastructure, including data and computing infrastructure.

AAL finances a portfolio of infrastructure projects and facilities from Australian Government funding. AAL oversees the progress of these projects and reports regularly on them to the Government.

AAL Science Advisory Committee (4 positions)

In order to make informed decisions about the best way to invest in astronomy infrastructure, AAL relies upon strategic and technical advice from its advisory committees.

The Australian astronomy landscape is undergoing significant change:

- In 2017 Australia signed a ten-year strategic partnership agreement with the European Southern Observatory (ESO).
- In 2018, the management of the AAT was transferred to a consortium of Australian universities, with AAL as the consortium manager.
- The SKA precursor telescopes (MWA and ASKAP) are in full-scale operations, and AAL has increased its involvement with high-energy astrophysics facilities.
- Planning for the next Decadal Plan for Australian astronomy in 2024/25 has begun.

The AAL Science Advisory Committee (ASAC) is tasked with providing AAL with strategic advice on the infrastructure requirements of the Australian astronomical community, to enable them to address the six key science questions for Australian astronomy, as described in the Australian Astronomy Decadal Plan:

1. How did the first stars and galaxies transform the Universe?
2. What is the nature of dark matter and dark energy?

3. How do galaxies form and evolve across cosmic time?
4. How do stars and planets form?
5. How are elements produced by stars and recycled through galaxies?
6. What is the nature of matter and gravity at extreme densities?

ASAC may be asked specific questions by the AAL Board but will also have a remit to provide overview advice on developments in astronomy and their relation to the Decadal Plan and the Mid Term Review.

To complement the skills and expertise of the ongoing ASAC members, AAL is seeking astronomers with particular experience in stellar astrophysics and multi-messenger astronomy.

ASAC meets quarterly via video conference.

The AAL Board will appoint new members to ASAC in November. Appointments may be made for one- or two-year terms from January 1, 2024.

Applications

If you consider yourself well placed to contribute to ASAC via your expertise, ideas, and experience, please email applications@astronomyaustralia.org.au with a maximum three-page application including:

- A covering letter describing your expertise relevant to the committee terms of reference (see below)
- A brief CV
- Any relevant conflicts of interest.

Please do not hesitate to contact [Dr James Murray](#), Director of Programs, with any questions regarding the vacant committee positions.

AAL is particularly interested in candidates with experience in the areas outlined above but encourages applications from all interested candidates with the appropriate skills and expertise. AAL specifically considers gender balance across committee appointments and seeks to maximise the number of AAL member institutions involved with AAL committees.

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AAL Science Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Terms of Reference

The AAL Science Advisory Committee (ASAC) is a committee of Astronomy Australia Ltd.

The purpose of ASAC is to assist AAL by executing the following:

- Consider the suite of Australia's national telescopes and computing facilities (including the Australian share of international facilities) and assess whether they, both individually and in combination, cater for the needs of the Australian community in addressing the key science questions of the Australian Astronomy Decadal Plan 2016 – 2025.
- Advise on how to leverage Australian capabilities to maximise participation and collaboration in, and benefits from, astronomy infrastructure projects of national significance.
- Keep the Board apprised of global developments in major telescope facilities, astrophysical experiments and computing infrastructure, and provide it with strategic advice accordingly.
- Advise the Board on the strategic alignment of new project proposals with the Decadal Plan, and on their prospective scientific return-on-investment.

Membership

- ASAC will be composed of astronomers from a broad range of scientific and technical fields.
- Members of ASAC are appointed by the AAL Board for one- or two-year terms, with the possibility of renewal. Committee members will be appointed by AAL via an application process. AAL will appoint a Chair to the committee.
- The committee will comprise ten members, with diversity across the full breadth of Australian astronomy including (but not limited to): observing techniques and wavelength regimes, observation, theory and eResearch.
- An AAL Board member will sit on ASAC in an ex-officio (non-voting) capacity.
- The AAL Board may choose to include additional ex-officio (non-voting) positions, for multi-directional strategy and information sharing purposes.
- The committee will be limited to a maximum of 12 members (including ex-officio members).
- AAL aims for institutional, geographical, career stage and gender diversity across its advisory committees.
- Meeting frequency: quarterly.